

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A bipolar plate for fuel cell stacks which comprises two outer surfaces electrically connected to one another, for the electrical contacting as well as for the discharge and supply of gases and/or fluids to surfaces of fuel cells, said surfaces being adjacent to the outer surfaces, characterized in that the bipolar plate comprises a frame which is open in the central region as well as an inner part arranged in the central region, wherein the frame and the inner part are elastically coupled to one another utilizing an elastomer.

2. (Currently Amended) A bipolar plate according to claim 1, characterized in that the inner part and the frame are connected by an elastic element ~~belonging to the bipolar plate~~.

3. (Previously Presented) A bipolar plate according to claim 2, characterized in that the elastic element is designed as an elastomer peripheral moulding of the frame and/or inner part.

4. (Withdrawn) A bipolar plate according to claim 2, characterized in that the elastic element is bonded to the inner part and/or to the frame or is connected to the inner part and/or frame with a positive fit.

5 - 13. (Canceled)

14. (Withdrawn) A fuel cell stack which in an axial layering between individual fuel cells contains bipolar plates characterized in that the fuel cell stack for the central region and the region of the frame comprises means for the axial compression of the fuel cell stack and/or means for the separate axial compression of the fuel cell stack.

15. (Withdrawn) A fuel cell stack according to claim 14, characterized in that the compression means are clamping bolts, clamping strips, non-plane end-plates and/or bipolar plates, hydraulic compression means or clamping yokes.

16. (Previously Presented) A bipolar plate according to claim 1, characterized in that the frame is provided with seals for a fluid-tight closure to adjacent components.

17. (Previously Presented) A bipolar plate according to claim 1, characterized in that the frame comprises passage openings for gasses and/or fluids, as well as fastening means.

18. (Previously Presented) A bipolar plate according to claim 17, characterized in that the passage openings of the frame are open towards the central region.

19. (Previously Presented) A bipolar plate according to claim 17, characterized in that the inner part comprises a hollow inner space and this may be connected to at least one passage opening of the frame.

20. (Previously Presented) A bipolar plate according to claim 1, characterized in that the frame material is selected from the group consisting of plastic and elastomer.

21. (Previously Presented) A bipolar plate according to claim 20, characterized in that the inner part is of metal, graphite or graphite composite or is coated with a metal layer or consists of a conductive plastic.

22. (Previously Presented) A bipolar plate according to claim 20, characterized in that the inner part comprises an embossed flowfield for a large-surfaced gas distribution, on an outer surface of the inner part.

23. (Previously Presented) A bipolar plate according to claim 2, characterized in that the frame toward the central region peripherally comprises a bordering for holding the inner part or the elastic element.